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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

MARCH 05, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for March 05, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. ELECTION EXCITEMENT IN SIIRT
(Dunya/Tercuman/Turkiye) Excitement increases as the elections in Siirt approach. It appears as though AK Party leader Recep Erdogan will gain his presidency from Siirt. Erdogan was banned from politics because of a speech he gave 4 years ago in the same town. AK Party is confident they will bring out 3 deputies, since DEHAP withdrew from the elections. The election will be held on Sunday March 9, between 6:00 and 15:00. The following parties will participate in the election: TKP (Turkish Communist Party), IP (Labor party), CHP (Peoples Republican Party) and AK Party (Justice and Development Party). The other parties have announced that they will not participate in the election.

3. WAR PREPARATIONS CONTINUE IN BATMAN
(Evrensel) Ramps for Patriot missiles have been set up in Batman airport and will be operated by Dutch soldiers. It is reported that 200 trucks carrying equipment arrived at the Batman airport under the modernization project. Large numbers of work machines from various provinces were brought to Batman Village Services Directorate. It is reported that the machines are going to be sent to the camps that will be set up for refugees.

4. ERBAKAN'S DEMAND REJECTED
(Cumhuriyet/Sabah) The State Security Court in Diyarbakir rejected a request to purge the judicial records of Necmettin Erbakan, the last president of the closed Refah party (Prosperity Party). Erbakan's attorney, Mehmet Ener pointed out that the decision would not affect Erbakan's right to vote or to be elected.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

5. NO TO WAR BUT YES TO DOLLAR
(Tercuman) MP Mahmut Duyan, CHP (Peoples Republican Party) deputy and president of Industrialist and Businessmen's Association in Mardin, said "no to war" and voted against permitting American troops use Turkish bases. On the other hand, he rented his factory in Kiziltepe, Mardin to the American army. Duyan's reply to the criticism regarding the issue was that he had rented a factory that belonged to him, which is not of interest to anyone and it is not a contradiction, it is only trade. It is reported that security forces prevented an American military attaché to enter the region.
HOLTZ